

If it Brings Me Back to You by **Luddleston**

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Summary:

Matt's reunion with Shiro wasn't exactly how he'd imagined it, but it stumbles its way into perfection after a while.

His relationship with Shiro takes a little longer to turn back into what it used to be.

If it Brings Me Back to You

Author's Note:

Listen, sometimes I just think a lot about Shiro not knowing whether Matt was alive for a real long time and how much that would mess you up.

!!Quick Warning: Lots of talking about stuff that happened to Shiro when he was a prisoner, including his arm being amputated and a lot of other purposefully inflicted injuries. If that freaks you out, you can totally skip the second part and just know that that's what they talk about!!

Matt's reunion with Shiro wasn't exactly how he'd imagined it.

And he'd had plenty of time to imagine it. When he was in a Galra work camp with no hope of escape except for what he could barely hang onto, he'd pictured Shiro taking on Zarkon himself in the ring and winning, coming for him and quite literally sweeping him off his feet. Later, after he'd been rescued by the rebels, his mental picture had switched to them saving Shiro instead, and taking out as many galra as they could. And then, when he was alone in a monitoring station, reading incoming communications, stuck by himself for months at a time, he began imagining Shiro opening the door and just walking inside, like he was coming home, like nothing had changed.

He hadn't imagined the giant, mechanical lions.

And of course, he hadn't expected his sister, which, sorry Shiro, was even better than being reunited with his boyfriend, because it had seemed that much more impossible. Finding Shiro again had at least been plausible—they had both been in space—but finding Katie...

He hadn't even let himself imagine that.

Shiro was terse, wound tight in front of his teammates like he was when the cadets back at the Garrison were getting close to driving him over the edge and making him throw his patience mantra out the window. He was glad to see Matt. Matt was glad to see him. The two of them never spoke to each other in private.

Just before Naxzela, Matt found himself damn near *losing his mind*, because Shiro was there, *right in front of him*, and hadn't kissed him, hadn't held him for more than a perfunctory second. Matt wasn't sure if he should have even been calling Shiro his boyfriend anymore, except that he wasn't going to let that slip away without a fight, or at least without a huge argument. So he was probably as tense as Shiro flying into things—even more so, flying out.

The way Shiro kissed him as soon as the both of them were back on the castle got rid of more tension than a two-hour massage could've. For a second, it was like they weren't billions of light-years from home. Like they were just standing in Shiro's bedroom, and there weren't a bunch of teenagers staring wide-eyed and open-mouthed at them.

Pidge said she'd already known. Matt seriously doubted that, but he couldn't tell if she was lying. He'd trained her too well.

In the following weeks, Matt slowly moved his things into Shiro's bedroom. He started spending the nights there after he stayed over a couple times and "accidentally" fell asleep. Shiro caught on pretty fast, and invited him to move in, "you know, for real." Matt slept on Shiro's left instead of his right, now, because Shiro didn't like to touch him with the galra arm. Both of them had nightmares, and neither of them got enough sleep, but, by some miracle of the cosmos, he had Shiro to kiss him goodnight and good morning. That was enough for him.

When Shiro finally had a day without a full schedule of coalition meetings, training with the paladins, and strategizing with the alteans, the two of them stayed in bed long past the time the castle's cycle decided was dawn. Matt decided to spend their free time reacquainting himself with Shiro's tongue.

It was familiar enough that if he had his eyes closed, it felt like they'd never left Earth at all. He swore that when he opened them, he'd see Shiro's overcrowded desk, and the hooks on the walls where Shiro kept his coat and his keys. Then, Shiro's right hand hesitated over his waist, and Matt noticed that the life support systems of the castle buzzed differently from the Garrison's central air. He opened his eyes and saw silver spaceship walls and the gentle glow from the keypad that opened the door.

"You can touch me with it, you know," Matt said, taking Shiro's metal wrist and pulling until his palm was splayed on Matt's hip. The metal arm was warm, probably the heat of the servos inside, but not as warm as his skin.

"I didn't know whether you'd..." he started, and then didn't continue, giving him a helpless look instead.

"It's just you," Matt said. "Galra might've made it, but you're the person it's attached to. And, not sure if you've noticed, but I'm pretty attached to you, too."

That finally got a smile out of him. Shiro didn't smile as often anymore. When he did, it seemed like Matt startled them out of him, like the same reflex that had Matt reaching for his temples to readjust a pair of glasses he hadn't worn in over a year. This time, though, Shiro's smile was slower, and it stuck, like he meant to keep it on.

Good. If there was something that they deserved, it was to make each other happy. Matt pressed his lips to Shiro's smile and pulled him in again, and Shiro's mechanical arm moved up his back, then down again, like he had to re-learn the shape of him with it. It made Matt want to pull Shiro's arm apart again. How was his sense of touch different, now? How would his nervous system even distinguish between touching something with the mechanical arm and his organic one?

Matt was so caught up in scientific inquiry that he nearly missed Shiro's arm skirting up the back of his shirt. Against his bare skin, the pads of his fingers were a little cold. "This alright?" Shiro asked, because he must've felt Matt shiver.

"More than," Matt said, and did what was only natural. He swung a leg over Shiro's side and reoriented himself on top of Shiro, still kissing him, until Shiro's head dropped back against the pillows and he tilted his face to the side so that Matt's next kiss landed on his cheek.

"I, um," Shiro started, and his organic hand squeezed Matt's knee. "I don't know... uh. About sex."

About sex. Right. They'd been dancing around it since Matt started sleeping in Shiro's bed, probably because the last time Matt had slept in Shiro's bed, it had been two nights before the Kerberos mission, and they fucked three times. Ordinarily, sharing a bed led to nudity, nudity led to sex, and sex led to whispered confessions of love that he could still faintly hear in the liminal space between being awake and falling asleep.

Nowadays, he heard it because Shiro was whispering it to him.

Since reuniting, Shiro had been almost *shy* with him, his hands carefully staying above Matt's waistline, his body kept a frustrating few inches away. It was like they'd reverted to the awkward seventeen-year-olds they'd been when they first started dating, clumsily touching each other in the dark of their shared dorm, only stumbling into sex after somebody brought a contraband bottle of liquor to Matt's eighteenth birthday party. Matt had already spent too much of his life frustratingly turned on by Shiro but not able to do anything about it, so he wasn't pleased by this regression.

"Why?" Matt asked him, "is it because you're afraid you'll be rusty at it? Because I promise you, I didn't spend *any* of my time at the rebel bases fucking sexually competent aliens. Or sexually incompetent aliens. Or any aliens at all."

"No," Shiro said, before Matt continued reassuring him that he hadn't been with anybody else, "I just... I don't know if I *can*."

"What, did the galra cut your dick off?" He knew they hadn't. Shiro wore tight pants. He knew he had also been extremely tasteless. "I'm sorry. I don't mean it like that. But you know me, I'm the 'find the solution to the problem

and get over it' kind of guy, so... I just mean... I can help, if you tell me what's wrong."

Shiro blew out a sigh that ruffled the white streak in his hair. Matt brushed it off his face and decided that he should probably climb off of Shiro's lap. Once he was rearranged lying next to him, face-to-face, Shiro continued. "I don't really know," he admitted. "It's not like I've *tried*."

That was a reassurance Matt hadn't known he'd needed. "Okay, so you haven't been fucking aliens, either. But I mean, like... you've touched yourself, right?" God knows he spent his time in that lonely communications monitoring center giving himself some love.

Shiro went tellingly silent. He fidgeted with the sleeve of Matt's T-shirt, which had been an alien shirt with sleeves that went to his knees, until he took some scissors to it.

"You haven't?"

Shiro looked embarrassed when he admitted that, "I mean, I've *tried*. But there was always something interrupting me, or I just... couldn't. Finish, I mean."

Matt had to stamp down hard on the urge he had to screech something like *what do you mean, you haven't orgasmed in a year and a half!?* "Wait. Really? You never...?"

"I don't think I really like it much, anymore," Shiro said. "I mean, every time, I would just end up thinking about you, and then... God, Matt, I didn't even know if you were *alive*, and that didn't really put me in the mood."

Matt felt suddenly guilty for getting off while thinking about Shiro when it was only optimism keeping him alive in Matt's mind. He ducked his head below Shiro's chin and pressed his forehead to Shiro's chest. "Yeah, I can imagine," he said. "But, now... now that we're together again... do you want to try?"

He felt the breath Shiro took as if it were his own. Maybe he took a breath, too. "I want to try," he said, "but I'm afraid I won't be good. I mean, I don't even know if I could get it up, I just." His sigh ruffled through Matt's hair. "I don't want to fuck this up."

"You won't," Matt said, and pulled Shiro into a kiss. He tried to make it say, *just having you is enough for me*, because if he said it out loud, he might start crying.

"Thanks, babe," Shiro said afterward, looking relieved, and Matt realized that Shiro had been spending a lot of time trying to figure out when to have this conversation. He kissed him again, for his trouble.

"I'm sure plenty of couples get past the challenge of erectile dysfunction, anyway."

Shiro snorted. "That's *different*. I'm not *old*, god. I just have PTSD."

"I dunno, your hair's going white." Matt pulled on Shiro's bangs to prove it.

"*That's not what it is*," Shiro said, in a furious whisper. "Also, I'm pretty sure if you say 'erectile dysfunction' again, I will never get hard ever again, in my whole life."

"I won't tempt fate," Matt agreed, snuggling closer to him. Shiro's mechanical arm was still over Matt's side, and Matt's body heat was starting to make it warm. Huh. It was like he was part cold-blooded.

"I, um. Do you still want to, you know, try?" Shiro asked, like he'd do it if Matt said yes, and he'd make it good, too.

"Not tonight," he decided. "We'll do it when you're ready. You just let me know, baby. Unless, y'know, we're in the middle of the lounge. What am I saying. You wouldn't do that. You're the most discreet person who's ever had a secret boyfriend, ever."

"And you're the least," Shiro said, and then yawned. "Alright. 'Night, Matt. Love you."

"You too, sweetheart. Always will."

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"When you're ready" turned out to be a couple of weeks later, after a full day of intense physical training left all of them a little worse for wear, and Allura, uncharacteristically enough, decided to cancel their strategy meeting for the evening. It made sense; she was just as exhausted as the rest of them, and she'd taken a few hits in training. One of them had been Matt's, and she had kicked him back onto the ground immediately after. He had the bruise on his elbow to prove it.

He and Shiro went to bed early, while the rest of the group watched another in the series of weird altean movies they'd found in the ship's data storage. Matt hadn't seen any of the prequels, so he didn't understand what was happening, and Shiro liked making out with Matt more than watching Lance and Hunk throw popcorn at each other.

"Going to bed early" turned into Shiro spooning up behind him and covering every bare inch of his neck with kisses, starting soft, then getting a little bitey. Then a *lot* bitey, holy shit, Matt was lucky he wore a fucking cape around, because he was going to come away with a perfect imprint of Shiro's teeth right over his trapezius.

Matt didn't catch himself before grinding his ass back into Shiro's crotch, and he froze up as soon as he realized what he'd done, worried he'd crossed a line they hadn't talked about yet. "Sorry. I shouldn't have—" he began, but Shiro grabbed his hip and pulled him back again, until they were flush against one another. Both of them were just in T-shirts and sweats, their armor stacked up on the other side of the room.

"It's alright," Shiro said, bending to kiss over the spot he'd marked up.

"I still shouldn't have done it without asking," Matt said, pinching the bridge of his nose between his thumb and forefinger. They hadn't talked about *it* again, and Matt had been doing well at conscientiously keeping his body a hand-span away from Shiro's when they kissed. He was pretty sure Shiro still noticed when he got hard anyway.

"So do you wanna start asking about some other things?" Shiro asked, grinding against his ass, his breath making the space between Matt's neck and shoulder humid. "I'm in the mood."

Shiro tried to sound casual, but Matt caught just a hint of nervousness in his voice. He was nowhere near as collected when he replied, "what, um, what do you want to do?" God, he swore his voice hadn't been that high since he was sixteen. Had this been a couple years ago, this would've been nothing much. They *slept* this close, usually naked, and now he was losing his mind over some gentle grinding through clothes. Apparently, that's what happens when you're away from your boyfriend for a depressing amount of time.

So, when Shiro's hand moved from resting innocently on Matt's side to cupping his dick through his pants, Matt could take no blame for the noise he made.

"You alright?" Shiro asked, and he had no right to be chuckling like that.

"Peachy." Matt ground back against him again, and expected Shiro's laughter to dissolve into a moan, but instead, he stopped making any sound at all. The two of them halted, still pressed tight together, and then Shiro started to move, rubbing up against him, his palm still resting over Matt's crotch, not pressing down. Shiro felt like he was starting to get hard, and Matt huffed out a laugh, because he'd had a hard-on since Shiro started kissing his neck, and it was nice of him to finally catch up.

"I've been thinking about it," Shiro said into his ear, his voice low, rough, the way it only sounded when they were in bed. Or when he'd been in a good, long fight, and he was talking to them through the comms and giving Matt the most confusing boner of his life. "I think I want you on top."

He might've said something else too, but it was drowned out by Matt's mental hallelujah chorus that clicked on as soon as he heard, "I want you on top."

"Yes, absolutely, yes, let's do that," Matt said, wrenching himself around in Shiro's grip, propping him up on his bruised elbow and giving exactly zero shits about how much it hurt. Which was considerably, because when

Allura kicked his ass, she pulled only enough punches not to break something.

He twisted until he was face-to-face with Shiro, hitched a leg over his side and tipped him onto his back. Not something Matt would've been able to do before, unless Shiro wanted him to. Now that he was strong enough, he wasn't so sure Shiro wanted him to. "Are you...?"

"I'm fine," said Shiro, who did not look fine. "It's just... you're strong." He was blushing, and he licked his lower lip before pulling it between his teeth. Oh, so he *was* fine. As soon as Matt settled on top of him, the measure of exactly how fine Shiro was pressed against his thigh.

Oh yeah. They were doing this.

Matt had his shirt halfway over his head when he felt Shiro's hands clench on his thighs, and he glanced down, puzzled, because Shiro had a distinct look of panic. "You do realize we kind of have to be naked to do this, right?" he said. Shiro's eyes didn't meet his.

"Just—come here. I want to kiss you," Shiro said, pulling him down, and alright, Matt was okay with this. Shiro's mouth had always been perfect, and Matt was very susceptible to distractions in the shape of kisses. Especially when they were combined with Shiro's hands on his back, against his bare skin for the first time in too fucking long.

"I think I might've gotten in over my head with this," Shiro admitted, his lips brushing Matt's when he spoke.

"Why's that?" Matt didn't back off, and he could still feel Shiro's mouth against his. Shiro pushed closer for another kiss, gentle enough that Matt could feel that he was trembling a little. His hands weren't shaky yet, he just felt like he had too much collected energy trapped inside him.

"Nobody's seen me naked since..." Since the galra.

Matt pressed his lips to Shiro's again, and then kissed the bridge of his nose, his only visible scar. "It's okay. I have scars, too," he said, and he knew that

Shiro's hand was sliding down his thigh just to feel for the one that he'd left there. Matt caught it in his, instead, and pressed Shiro's fingers to the scar on his shoulder, a claw mark that was proof of how dangerous galra soldiers could be with or without weapons. "Here, and—" lower, on his waist, errant laser fire that would've hit him in a vital organ if it'd been six inches to the right. There were a couple big stripes across his back, too, reminders of how unkind galra work camps had been to him. Lash marks.

"Mine aren't all like that," Shiro said, and it sounded like he was admitting something secret. "A lot of them are from the ring, but some... aren't. They're from the druids, and it's... not pretty."

"All of you is pretty," Matt argued. "What they did to you may have been ugly, but you're not."

"Okay," Shiro said, and Matt's heart went tight in his chest, because Shiro didn't sound much like he believed him. "I'm just worried we won't keep going after this."

"If we stop, it's because one of us wants to, not because of what you look like. I promise," Matt said.

"Okay."

Shiro sat up a bit and pulled off his shirt, then settled back and let Matt look at him, let his hands pass over the gnarled wounds from the ring, most of which had been poorly stitched up. Shiro didn't look at Matt while he did it, just closed his eyes and let Matt take his time and trace out each one. There was a big one across his chest, and Matt breathed a low sigh when he realized that if it'd been deeper, it would've hit his heart. The one on his ribs was a dark gray instead of pink like the rest of them, and Matt had been told it was the one laid into him by pure quintessence.

Those weren't the ones Shiro had been worried about, though. He tensed when Matt's fingers brushed the place his mechanical arm was sutured to his shoulder, and his eyes opened. Professionally done, Matt realized; Shiro probably didn't even have an amputation scar. The druids were practiced with this, like it was some kind of sick hobby.

His worst scar, the one that made him stop breathing when Matt looked at it, was the one travelling down the length of his stomach, deviating just a little around his navel. It was surgical. Because Shiro was the first human they'd ever had in their lab. They'd opened him up like he was a car engine that you just had to pop the hood on, and it made Matt a little sick. He wasn't a violent person by nature, but he saw red then, because they'd taken him apart and tortured him, and they were still alive.

"Fuck," he finally breathed, "what did they do to you?" He could answer it himself. They'd treated him like a lab rat, and they deserved every round of laser fire Matt could hit them with.

"This is why I was afraid to show you," Shiro said, giving him a weak smile. "The look on your face right now."

"I just—they just—*fuck*," he repeated, beyond words. He plastered his hands over his face, because he was sure if he didn't have something physically holding him back, he'd start crying, or he'd scream, or *something*.

"I'm *fine*, Matt," Shiro said, pulling his hands away from his eyes and interlocking their fingers. "I survived. Also, we had Allura do a scan; they didn't like, steal my organs or anything."

Of course. Because they wouldn't risk losing their only *specimen*.

Matt sighed and slumped forward, squeezing Shiro's hands back. "Yeah, I get why you said it would ruin the night." He tucked his face into Shiro's neck and let himself relax with the two of them skin-to-skin, something familiar even when Shiro's body looked alien, now. "I'm not—it's not that I think there's anything *wrong* with you, I just suddenly want to go murder every druid in Zarkon's fleet."

"Bloodlust, it's how you know he loves you," Shiro remarked, and that smoothed down his hackles a bit.

"Yeah, it's the little things." Matt let Shiro adjust them until he was curled up against Shiro's side, his head on Shiro's chest, just above his heart. Matt tried not to let his hand shake as he rested it over the scars on Shiro's

abdomen, and he turned his face in toward Shiro's neck to take an unsteady breath. "I'm sorry. I shouldn't have asked you to show me this if you didn't want to."

"You're the only person I'd want to show this to," Shiro confessed, his fingers running over one of Matt's own scars, one that he didn't particularly remember getting.

Matt made a frustrated noise against Shiro's skin. "I fucked this up. This was supposed to be sexy, not depressing. Like, hey, look at all the times we almost died. Real romantic, Holt."

"Haven't died yet," Shiro said, but he didn't sound optimistic. Just pointing out the obvious. "Matt, we'll have other nights. Plenty of them." He pulled the blankets up over them, brushed Matt's hair out of his face. Left his knuckles resting against the nick on Matt's cheek. "We've had worse not-sex."

Matt remembered a particular occasion involving a fire alarm. "You're right. I just really thought tonight was gonna go better."

"Yeah, well, it just about figures the galra are out to ruin my sex life, too."

Matt watched him as he spoke, even though he could only see the side of his jaw and his throat. It was strange to him to be able to see Shiro in perfect clarity in bed, because normally, he was so nearsighted without his glasses, he'd have to be within three inches of Shiro to actually see his face. Now, though, he could see all the ridges on his mechanical arm lying a few feet away, and he could see the pattern on the ceiling when he stared up and tried to slow his racing mind. He wished he had an easy way to turn the world into a blur again, just to keep himself from concentrating on anything.

He closed his eyes and focused on Shiro's breathing, instead. Because somehow, miraculously, he still was. Matt had never really believed in miracles, but if there was something out there that'd brought Shiro back, he'd thank whatever cosmic force did it.

Even if that cosmic force was a giant series of psychic, multicolored cat robots.

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If there was one thing to say for the newest alien species Allura was trying to court for the Coalition, it was that they knew how to party.

That meant Shiro and Matt were on what he'd started mentally referring to as "babysitting duty," making sure the younger paladins didn't do something offensive or, in Shiro's case, making sure the younger paladins didn't drink anything alcoholic. Matt had stopped bothering to ask Lance what exactly was in his drink, because it'd be hypocritical of him, considering how tipsy he'd gotten.

If there was one thing alien biology made him particularly happy about, it was that most species were similarly inhibited by ethanol-based alcohols, so drinks were just as terrible-tasting on any planet, and they would get him just as drunk. Some of his rebel buddies had liked making him taste weird space booze after missions just to see how he responded (coughing. A lot of coughing. That shit burned.)

Shiro, the paragon of maturity that he was, had declined anyone who offered him a drink, which Matt thought wasn't very diplomatic of him. He said as much, and Shiro replied, "someone needs to be sober enough to make sure Lance doesn't do something stupid."

He was not wrong. "I'm sober enough to make sure Lance doesn't do anything stupid, I just have a slightly more lax definition of what 'stupid' is." Matt tried to switch Shiro's drink out for his, and Shiro noticed and switched them back.

"And what's yours?"

"Anything that could potentially get him killed."

Shiro made a face like there was a long list of things he'd consider stupid before he got to the deadly ones. "Matt, he could do something that would

ruin the alliance—"

"Which would get him killed, by Allura, so it's stupid," Matt reasoned. He nudged his shoulder against Shiro's. "Come on, babe. Think about all the shit we got into when we were their age. I'm sure none of them are as bad as we were."

"I think the worst we did was go to parties and drink," Shiro said, and then he paused, considering, and stopped glaring down Keith, who was just glaring back and pouring himself another one. "So, okay, maybe I shouldn't worry about that. Hmm. I guess we trespassed a little bit."

"Graffiti," Matt added, "or, maybe vandalism?"

"That was you, not me."

"Fraternization."

That one made Shiro choke on his non-alcoholic beverage. "Alright, yeah, guilty."

"I'm just saying, we had a lot of sex for two cadets who were supposed to be very, very celibate."

This time, Shiro deliberately stole the drink out of Matt's hand and downed the rest of it, and Matt wasn't sure if it was because Shiro was trying to get him to stop traveling down the road towards drunk, or because he wanted to join him.

"Alright, seriously, we have to keep an eye on them," he said, and Matt begrudgingly agreed, switching over to the same weird kind of fruit juice Shiro was having, which tasted like kiwi.

He had to admit, Shiro looked awfully fond even as he was pulling a very intoxicated Lance away from the dance floor. It was probably in Lance's best interests, anyway, because these aliens, Matt had noticed, were very handsy dancers. And sure, Lance had been going out there like he was

trying to make somebody jealous, but Matt thought there were much better ways to get Keith to notice him.

They successfully prevented any diplomatic conflicts, bodily injuries, or alcohol poisoning, and by the time they'd gotten all the paladins to call it a night and head back to the castle, it was the space equivalent of two A.M.

Perfect time of night for the two of them to steal a bottle of something and head back to their room, honestly.

"I'm just saying, those aren't anywhere *close* to the weirdest aliens we've met," Shiro said.

"They had a second set of arms with lobster... thingies." Matt made pinching shapes with his hands in lieu of the right word.

"Claws," Shiro said, "it's claws. You're *drunk*, Matt." He stole the bottle back, and took a long drink, wiping his thumb over his bottom lip when it came away wet.

"No, no, I can't do words right even when I'm sober," Matt said, and Shiro shrugged, like he was agreeing, which was probably fair. He'd had to sit through Matt poorly explain a ton of scientific processes, so if anybody had a right to complain about Matt's word choice, it was him.

The bottle of something they'd stolen wasn't very alcoholic, kind of like space wine. Space champagne, really, because it was carbonated. It tasted good, not fruity, but sweet, kind of like caramel. Matt approved of the aliens' tastes in alcohol much more than the rebels'. Then again, most of what they got him to taste-test was more like space moonshine. He was pretty sure it was unregulated shit, at the very least.

Matt reached to tug the bottleneck out of Shiro's grasp, and his metal fingers clinked against the glass as he let go. They'd almost completely finished it over the hour, in between being very species-ist and going over the weirdest alien culture things they'd encountered. Matt made a mental note to question one of the other paladins about the "noodle people" Shiro had mentioned, before shuddering and curling into himself a little.

"Give it back," Shiro said after a second, leaning his side heavily into Matt's.

"Nope. I drank it all," he said, pointing at the empty bottle he'd set on the ground, where it could be come a tripping hazard for future Matt. He decided that was future Matt's problem.

Shiro grumbled something that might've sounded a little bit like *you bastard*, except Matt didn't know anybody who would call someone a bastard—well, Pidge might—and pushed Matt onto his back, spectacularly missing his mouth when he tried to kiss him. Matt realigned them both so that his knee wasn't shoving into Shiro's ribs and so Shiro could actually kiss him.

He was warm, his body heavy over Matt's but not suffocating, kissing him a little sloppier than usual. He had a five o'clock-plus-a-few-hours shadow, and his chin scraped a little against Matt's jaw when he ducked to kiss his neck. The planet they were on was hot, and they had the ship's gangplank open, so the tropical air was sneaking in and making their bedroom warmer than usual. It made Shiro's robotic arm warm, too, his fingers almost like skin when they brushed gently against Matt's cheek, and then so clearly *not* when he pressed against it and found unyielding metal.

"Hey, big guy," Matt said, hooking one ankle over the other at the small of Shiro's back, using him to hold his legs up. "How drunk are you, exactly?"

"More than I've been in a long time," Shiro replied, his voice muffled by the fabric of Matt's T-shirt, because he had decided to kiss his chest, too.

"Enough to regret it in the morning?"

He got a considering hum in response, probably because Shiro usually regretted it in the morning. Matt knew he'd only had the equivalent of a couple glasses of wine, plus whatever had been in that drink he'd stolen from Matt, but Shiro was enough of a lightweight that he'd once gotten almost completely trashed at this officers' dinner just because people kept offering him beers.

"I don't think so," he said.

"Then," Matt started tracing his fingers down Shiro's throat to his collarbone, then his chest, "you wanna have some fun?"

Shiro hesitated just long enough before his, "okay," that Matt pulled away from their next kiss first.

"You sure?"

"I just..." Shiro dropped his head to Matt's shoulder, letting out a sigh that ruffled his hair. "I don't want to be drunk for the first time. I want it to be so good, baby, and... yeah."

"Drunk Shiro is not that great at sex," Matt said, and Shiro laughed, rolling off of him, which was good, because he was starting to get a little uncomfortable.

"Uh, well neither is drunk Matt."

Matt ran a hand through Shiro's hair, then ruffled it like he did with Pidge's. "Well, geez, no wonder our first time was so bad."

"I thought it was *very* good," Shiro said, curling an arm around Matt's waist, scratching his back with blunt nails. "That's because I had no reference point for what good sex is." He paused for Matt to laugh, then started laughing, too, like he couldn't help himself. "God, we were terrible. I didn't even touch you."

The night they counted as their "first time" had been a couple days after Matt's eighteenth birthday, when the rest of their friends threw him a party involving a stolen bottle of Jack. Afterwards, Matt, like any horny teenager would *obviously* do, decided he was going to jerk off. He also decided he didn't want to move out of Shiro's bed.

"At least we were alright at kissing by that point."

"Still pretty alright at that," Shiro said, and pulled him in to prove it.

— — —

The two of them had been apart for a couple of days, because Matt and a small contingent of rebels were making a supply run for a group of undercover agents on a galra-occupied planet. Not exceedingly dangerous; in fact, it wasn't anything at all compared to the stuff Voltron did on the daily, which his baby sister seemed to handle just fine, so it posed basically no threat.

Shiro must've been worried about him anyway, because when Matt exited the docking bay in one piece, Shiro let out a breath he looked like he'd been holding since Matt kissed him goodbye.

"It was three days, you dork," Matt said, while Shiro stole him away to head back to their room before the formalities of the mission report had even ended. It was the only time Matt had seen Shiro chose desire over decorum, and it was doing great things for his ego. "Three goddamn days. I'm fine. You don't have to worry so much."

"I'm not *worried*," Shiro said, pulling Matt into his arms and, wow, actually off his toes a little bit, kissing him like he meant it. Like the little peck he'd given him when they were standing around outside the docking bay with the rest of everybody hadn't even been close to enough. "Okay, well, I was a little worried," he admitted, setting Matt down, "but, right now, I just *want* you."

"Oh, so that's not your bayard in your pocket, you just *are* happy to see me," Matt said, his mouth spreading into a satisfied grin.

When Shiro blushed, his scar went deeper pink than the rest of his face. "We don't have to, if you don't want to. I know you're probably tired, and you just got back, and all."

"Do you want to?" he asked, and got another kiss for his troubles, slower this time. Shiro's hands pressed against the small of his back, one over the other.

"I want to," he said slowly, quietly, like he was admitting a secret. "But, uh. I'm not sure how far we're going to get." His face said he wasn't sure if he was gonna be able to get it up, much less finish.

"Oh, baby, I can get you as far as you want," Matt said, like he could pour out enough confidence to chase Shiro's insecurity right out of him. He pushed on Shiro's chest gently, nudging him in the direction of the bed and he sat on the edge of it, his hands on Matt's hips, looking up at him expectantly. Like Matt had an actual plan for what he was going to do next.

Matt usually did have a plan for what to do next, but he was at a loss, here. Lack of data. Oh, well. Without time to accurately apply the scientific method, he was pretty alright at winging it.

Matt stripped out of his shirt and let Shiro do the same. They undressed without ceremony, because they'd done it enough that Shiro's scars were as familiar to Matt as his own. Then, Matt sat on his lap, hands braced on his shoulders, and kissed him. Shiro took his weight as easily as he always had, his hands on Matt's thighs and moving up, squeezing his ass once before continuing up his back, mismatched hands tracing parallel paths on either side of his spine. They traded kisses the same way they always did, because you never forgot how to do some things. Although, he hadn't gotten on a bicycle since heading to space, so he wasn't sure if that one was a myth.

Shiro hadn't forgotten how to turn him on, either, his fingers curling into Matt's waistband, just barely teasing it down. His opposite hand rubbed over Matt's cock, and, okay, this was starting to look like Shiro was just gonna get him off without time for reciprocity.

And *fuck*, Matt wanted Shiro to get him off, but he was very into doing unto others and all, and also very into Shiro's face mid-orgasm. He stood, just for a second, then dropped to the floor on his knees between Shiro's legs, wasting no time in dropping his head to press his mouth to Shiro's crotch, liking the gasp it punched out of him.

"Matt, I don't know if..." Shiro started, and Matt only lifted his head to replace his mouth with his hand and tell Shiro to *shush*.

Shiro wasn't completely hard, but he was getting there, and Matt would spend as much time as he needed. Or, he'd completely wear out his patience. Whichever came first. He kissed the line of Shiro's cock through his pants and then took a deep breath, his lips still just a couple thin layers of fabric away from Shiro's skin. He hadn't realized how much he'd missed the smell of Shiro, especially *here*, which baffled him and kind of grossed him out. Seriously, how gone on a man can you *be*?

The answer was, slightly more gone than that. Matt decided he missed the taste of him, too, and he let his thumb rest on the zipper of Shiro's pants. "Can I?" he asked.

"Can you what?" asked Shiro, whose logical processors didn't seem to be working so well.

"I wanna get your dick out, can I?" Matt clarified, hoping it wasn't too blunt.

It wasn't. Shiro answered by pushing Matt's hands out of the way and undoing his pants himself. Matt let him completely undress, standing so he could do the same, because fair's fair. Shiro was about half-hard, but Matt was pretty good with his mouth. Well-practiced, at the very least.

Going down on someone—well, deepthroating someone—was not one of those things you just never forgot how to do. It took a couple tries for Matt to get the rhythm right without choking himself, but once he did. Oh, then it had to be perfect.

He pulled off to see Shiro with a hand clapped over his mouth, his face flushed to red, his eyes unfocused. Shiro's cock was hard and wet between his legs, and his skin was hot all over, his breath hitching and his entire body lighting up wherever Matt touched him. Finally, *finally*. He felt like he'd been waiting half a lifetime to see Shiro like this again, but he'd wait a dozen more.

"You think you could come just like this?" Matt asked him, demonstratively stroking his cock again.

"Hah, I don't know about that," Shiro said. He reached for Matt, pulled him into his arms, laying back on the bed with Matt balanced overtop of him. "I want it to last," he said, "I want to go all the way."

Matt bit back on a half-formed quip about Shiro sounding like a teenage virgin, and ground his ass back against Shiro's cock instead. "Yeah? You want it like this?"

Shiro held his hips when he tried to do it again. "No, I want you inside me."

Matt's next breath came faster and sharper than he thought it would, both because the suggestion was probably the most arousing thing he'd ever heard, and because he thought it would be up there on the list of things not to do the first time you're trying to figure out how to do the sex thing again.

"You sure?" he asked, and he got that same, steady look Shiro wore on the battlefield. Great. Their next big fight was gonna be interesting, now.

"Yeah," Shiro said. "I've wanted that for a while, now." Matt started to rationalize his decision—maybe it was a good idea to start with that, after all, what better way to get Shiro back into sex than doing his favorite thing?

There was one catch.

"We don't have lube." And it wasn't like they could run to a drugstore somewhere, unless there was a space drugstore around the next asteroid field. Matt shoved his hand over his face and groaned into it.

"Yes we do," Shiro said, and it sounded like *of course we do*. He pointed Matt to a box of random shit under his bed, and next to another set of clothes, something that looked like it could very easily be turned into a bomb, and a towel—he snatched that, too, they'd need it—he found a pink plastic bottle covered with incomprehensible alien script. Matt held it out, Shiro nodded and confirmed that it was, in fact, space lube.

"Where the hell did you even get this," Matt said, squinting at it like he was going to somehow be able to read the language written on it if he stared really hard. It looked a little like Arabic, which Matt also did not read.

"Coran is way too quick to go along with all Lance's stupid ideas," Shiro said, which was only half of an explanation.

Matt wasn't sure if he wanted the other half. "Is it too much to hope that Lance was looking for this for something other than trying to seduce every alien we meet?"

"Yeah, probably. I confiscated it." Oh, he *confiscated* it, all right. There wasn't a lot missing, but there was enough to tell that he'd used it.

"He probably just got more," Matt mumbled. "Pretty sure he's only trying to seduce one alien these days, anyways." He popped the cap open and rubbed some of it between his fingers, and yeah, it definitely *felt* right.

"We ran the ingredients list through a translator," Shiro said, and Matt didn't want to know who 'we' was. "It's just silicone-based. Can't hurt you."

Matt shrugged, figured, fuck it, he'd lived through too much shit for this to be weird for him, and flopped back onto the bed. "Alright, then, why the hell not," he said, still making attempts to read something on the label, or at least determine what alien species had made this stuff. Eventually, he gave up and dropped it on the mattress. "Okay, how do you want to do this?"

If there was a proverbial jumping-off point, they'd reached it. This was the *yes, we're going to try this* moment. Matt really wished he could find his ability to breathe evenly, because it might make him feel more like a grown adult.

Shiro decided it would be easier if he was on his stomach, and Matt had nothing against the view. He straddled one of Shiro's thighs and leaned over his back, kissing along the V of his hairline, trailing down his nape, where he put in enough effort to leave a mark, because Shiro deserved it. Matt's own neck was well-decorated in fading bruises already, marks Shiro had put there before Matt left the castle. One of them was up high enough to be visible even with his cape on, placed right below his ear, and he was one hundred percent sure Pidge had seen it. So Matt left another hickey higher up, where the collar of Shiro's shirt wouldn't *quite* cover it.

Revenge was sweet, especially when it tasted like a man you were in love with.

Matt tried to keep himself propped up on one elbow so he could lean over Shiro while he touched him, but the position was too precarious for, ahem, *detail work*. If he was gonna do that, he'd have to save it for when they were fucking, and he had the use of both of his arms, but ideally, he would have Shiro on his back by that point. It had been way too damn long for him to not be sappy and fuck him face-to-face.

He sat back and grabbed the bottle, not missing the way Shiro's shoulders tensed up when he heard the cap of it snap open. "You let me know when you're ready to start, baby," Matt said, stroking his lower back with his free hand.

"Yeah, I'm ready," Shiro said, his voice not quite steady. Matt wasn't sure if it was nerves or anticipation, hoped for the latter, and pushed his middle finger in, leaning over and trying to watch Shiro's face, much as he could see, with it smushed in the pillow and all. He let out a low sound when Matt got inside him, and Matt desperately hoped it was a good one.

"Okay?" he asked.

"Mm-hm. It's not even all the way in, Matt. I'm fine."

Matt continued tracing his free hand over Shiro's shoulders while he fingered him, the tension and release in his muscles telling him more than Shiro's muffled noises did. He was tight around one finger, a vice around two. God, Matt couldn't even remember a time he'd been this tight, even if he thought back to their first few attempts at this. Granted, the first couple times it had been Shiro opening himself up on his own fingers, so he couldn't say for sure.

"You gotta relax, baby," he said, leaned over enough that his breath fanned out against Shiro's back. "We're not gonna be able to do this if you can't."

He saw Shiro's back rise and fall with a deep breath, and now he was no longer cutting off Matt's circulation, so, an improvement. He was still way

too tight for Matt to even think about getting a third finger in there, so he curled his first two and experimentally brushed against Shiro's prostate. That earned him a low moan that was *definitely* a good sound, a shuddering breath after, and Shiro grinding his hips against the bed. Given more attention, he started to open up, bit by bit.

It took a long time, longer than it ever had, and by the time Matt wasn't afraid he'd tear something if he tried to fuck him, Shiro's back was covered in sweat and he'd propped himself up on his elbows as if he could give himself more leverage, his head dropped to his chest, little, half-stifled noises punching out of him every time Matt moved his fingers.

"I'm ready," Shiro said, and Matt did not believe him.

"You're like, barely even sort of ready," he said, "but flip over. Got a way to get you the rest of the way there."

When Shiro rolled over, he was smiling up at Matt, and shit, wasn't that a beautiful sight. Matt brushed his hair out of his face, then trailed his knuckles down Shiro's knife-edge of a cheekbone, let his thumb rest on the dimple in his cheek. "Hey," Shiro said, sounding a lot like he did in the mornings, when they woke up facing each other and had to take a moment just to enjoy the fact that both of them were there and not halfway across the universe.

"Hey, yourself," Matt said back. "Also: I'm going to go down on you while I finger you, because that seems like a good idea." Usually, it would have Shiro coming down his throat, and if that happened now, Matt would be pretty damn pleased with himself, because he was starting to think tonight was more of a marathon than a sprint. It was whatever the opposite of a quickie was.

"Yeah, sounds good," Shiro agreed, the hand he had on Matt's head a lot more confident than his voice.

This time, when Matt got his mouth around Shiro's cock, he moved as slow as he could, trying to drag on pleasure, not drive him crazy. He figured if he could distract Shiro with a really good blowjob, he'd stop thinking about

whatever it was that kept him from relaxing enough to take Matt's fingers. It worked pretty damn well. When Matt looked up, he could see Shiro's abs tensing, and he almost forgot about the scar bisecting them, because any sign that he was giving Shiro some kind of pleasure was a gift.

Even when Matt was confident that Shiro could take his cock, he kept going, waiting for Shiro to cue him, because even if his body was ready, his brain could still be catching up. It didn't take long. It started with Shiro's hand going tight in Matt's hair, pulling, but not in any specific direction. Then, Shiro was pulling Matt off his dick, curling up so he was halfway to a sitting position.

"I'm ready, Matt, I'm ready, you don't have to keep—just fuck me."

And, there was his cue.

"Whatever you want, baby," Matt said. He squeezed more lube into his hand, then looked around Shiro's bedroom, thinking. "I guess we don't have any space condoms?"

"We haven't used a condom in years," Shiro reminded him.

"Just thought you might feel better that way," Matt said. "I mean, who knows what kind of weird space STDs we could have picked up?"

"Yeah, what with all the aliens you're not fucking," Shiro said, grinning at him, that teasing smile Matt hardly ever saw him pull in front of the other paladins. Nice to know he was still the only person Shiro could make fun of guiltlessly.

"Okay. I'm going to—"

"Just *go*, already."

It was nothing if not a green flag, so Matt laid his palms on Shiro's legs, spreading them wide enough that he could fit between, and then—

Holy fuck, he was tight. Matt knew he should've expected something like this, with the rocks Shiro seemed to be keeping in his shoulders instead of

muscle, but this was beyond an absurd amount of tension. Shit, this had to be hurting him. "Shiro," he said, not moving past the first inch and a half. "Shiro, are you alright?"

Shiro's sense of humor had escaped him, along with, it seemed, any remaining thread of arousal. "I'm okay," he said, and the creases between his eyebrows and the clench of his jaw told Matt that he was lying.

"No—nope, you're not okay, I'm not doing this," Matt said, and he would've moved, but Shiro got a hand around both of his biceps like he was trying to hold him still. The frown lines on his face visibly smoothed as he tried to relax, taking each breath deeper.

"I'm... I'm okay. Really. Just give me a second."

He did feel less like he was trying to strangle Matt's cock after that, but was still about as tight as porn liked to advertise virgins as being, and Matt knew he wasn't relaxed enough for him to move yet. "Okay. I'll give you a second, I just really think we should try something else," Matt said. Shiro was barely even hard anymore, and Matt was starting to feel less and less into this by the second.

Nothing happened for a minute, and then Shiro's breath rushed out of him at once. "This isn't working," he said, rubbing at his eyes, and Matt pulled out, because Shiro didn't seem like he was gonna stop him, this time.

"It's fine, Shiro. We can chalk this up to just, you know, a bad round, and keep going later. Maybe tomorrow night." Matt petted his hair and then the line between his eyebrows. Shiro shook his head and dropped his hands from his face.

He looked at Matt with the kind of determination that he only really showed while he was flying, and Matt decided he liked having that focused on him, instead of on whatever Shiro was piloting. "I don't want to stop," Shiro said, "I want... I think it'll work, if I just touch myself first, just to get used to the feeling again."

Matt had his doubts, but he wasn't the expert on Shiro's body, here, and so he handed him the lube without protest. He watched as Shiro poured some on his fingertips, then watched his face for reaction, to see if his theory had been correct.

"I can't do it with you staring at me," Shiro said, which Matt knew was not entirely true, because Shiro had his first two fingers up his ass already.

"You want me to blow you again?" he offered.

"No, just come here," Shiro said, and Matt curled up at his side, one hand on Shiro's chest, still keeping an eye on him, but in profile this time. At first, Shiro looked concentrated, the same kind of face he'd make if presented with a particularly confusing riddle. Or if he was trying to get his laptop to function when it kept spitting out error messages. It was like his body had turned into a puzzle he had to solve, or a machine that was malfunctioning.

Then, he found the solution, or the right gear to turn, or the source code to enter into a terminal—or some other metaphor for the way his facial expression slipped into pleasure with a soft moan. Matt broke into a smile, and he tipped his head to kiss Shiro's neck, then his throat, feeling his Adam's apple bob as he swallowed and his throat vibrate with another pleased sound. His cock was starting to fill out against his hip again, and he ducked his head so Matt could kiss his mouth with the kind of sloppiness that only came from the pressure of urgency.

"Come on, Matt, come here, I need you," he said, and when Matt sat up, he got to enjoy the sight of Shiro fucking himself on three of his fingers, moving with a comfortable ease he'd been missing all night.

Matt felt excitement bubble up inside him, because this was finally gonna *work*. He re-situated himself between Shiro's legs while Shiro wiped his fingers off on the towel Matt had set off to the side. "You ready?"

"Finally, yeah."

This time, when he pushed in, it felt *right*. Matt was overwhelmed for a second, that first hot, wet slide turning into his entire world, until Shiro pulled him into a kiss and his focus widened to the rest of them, to the way Shiro pulled him down and encompassed him like he belonged there. He did belong there.

Matt took things slow and steady—he knew what Shiro liked—and for a long time, neither of them spoke. They just moaned, and grasped for each other, and kissed when they had to, when there was no other outlet for anything they felt. Matt didn't think fucking had ever been this romantic, but then he thought, of course it had to have been, he was with Shiro. He was with a man who loved him with all of his being, and whose affection he returned with every part of him that he could.

Matt touched Shiro's cock, but after a while, Shiro tugged his hand away and entwined their fingers, instead, letting them rest just to the side of his head, where he could turn his face and kiss Matt's wrist. "I'm not so worried about that," Shiro said, his voice slightly muffled against Matt's skin.

Matt almost asked what, but he realized that Shiro meant coming. "You sure?"

"Yeah. Dunno if I can, don't care if we don't find out tonight."

Matt allowed himself a moment of dubiousness, right up until he realized that he sort of liked it like this. Just being together, without any goal for the night standing ahead of them, no finish line they had to cross. They could take as long as they wanted, *he* could take as long as he wanted, because Shiro would let him have this forever, if he could.

And it felt like forever. Of course, Matt knew that time didn't work that way, even when it didn't work like a clock said it should, but he could've sworn they were there for hours, touching each other, re-living every time they'd ever fucked before. Ever made love before, that's what Shiro would've said.

But someone had once told him all good things come to an end, or maybe he just misremembered a proverb and decided to apply it to a sex life.

Anyway, it was impossible for him to spend maybe-hours fucking Shiro without stumbling over that finish line he'd recently decided didn't actually matter so much, until his stomach clenched and every muscle in him went tense, and he decided it actually mattered very much. Because there was probably wanting a good orgasm, and then there was *needing to come*, and Matt had reached the latter.

"I'm close," he said, into Shiro's ear because he was pressed flush against him, and that's where his head was resting, "*fuck*, I'm so close."

Shiro said nothing in response but he did make a noise that Matt liked a lot and had missed hearing. He was pushing back against Matt just as much as Matt was fucking him, like both of them were, off-beat from each other, trying to get closer and closer.

"*Matthew*," Shiro said, and that was about when he surprised himself with his first orgasm in too damn long, and *fuck*, Matt loved him so much, so much, he couldn't believe it was real sometimes. "I love you, too," Shiro said, because Matt must've said some of that out loud. Shiro sounded like he was still coming down from it, and Matt was just *coming*, so maybe that finish line was kind of okay.

Kind of wonderful, actually. Matt hadn't quite forgotten how good it'd felt to come down from an orgasm with somebody else to hold you and kiss you and say whatever sweet things euphoria had planted in your brain, but he had kept himself from remembering it up 'til now. Shiro was so warm against him, even his mechanical arm was warm, because it'd been pressed against Matt's body and had absorbed all his heat.

"I missed this," Shiro said. He didn't say, "I missed you," because they'd said that a thousand times already. His voice wasn't quite back to normal yet.

"Me too," Matt said. His voice definitely wasn't back to normal, and probably wouldn't be for a while, but that's what he got for blowing Shiro for what he calculated to be half a fucking eternity. "I love you. Did I say that already? Whatever. I love you."

Shiro laughed, and it sounded like, "I love you, too."

Author's Note:

Visit me on tumblr @luddlestons or on my fanfiction/writing blog @bambi-simmons where I'll eventually post this. Right now I'm going to sleep. This fic took like, an age of man. In case you're wondering, Matt gets his ability to exaggerate time from me.